DC #14

DIRECT CURRENTS

BOOKS SHIPPING IN MARCH

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BATMAN BUTTONS
one-shot

BLASTERS SPECIAL
one-shot

THE JANUS DIRECTIVE
11-part series

THE LEGEND OF AQUAMAN SPECIAL
one-shot

PLUS...

An interview with Paul Kupperberg

Cover Of The Month
DOC SAVAGE #8

CHECKMATE! & SUICIDE SQUAD FOLLOW THE JANUS DIRECTIVE

THE JANUS DIRECTIVE has been issued...and if it's successful, America's intelligence agencies will fall under the control of one of the greatest evils ever to live.

Amanda Waller discovers that a plot is afoot to take over such covert organizations as CHECKMATE and the SUICIDE SQUAD and she makes her own plans to save them...even if it means destroying those she believes are against her. But not all those Amanda perceives as allies are really behind her.

THE JANUS DIRECTIVE is a special 11-part, eight-week-long event taking place in the pages of CHECKMATE! and SUICIDE SQUAD, both of which will be published twice-monthly during THE JANUS DIRECTIVE. Beginning in CHECKMATE! #15, writers Paul Kupperberg, John Ostrander, and Kim Yale, along with artists Steve Erwin, Rick Hoberg, Karl Kesel, John K. Snyder, Pablo Marcos, and Al Vey expose the world of superhero covert action and leave their mark on the entire DC Universe. Guest-stars appearing with the heroes of the SQUAD and the Knights of CHECKMATE include Peacemaker, Black Thorn, Sarge Steel, King Faraday, The Force of July, Major Force, and Lois Lane.

THE JANUS DIRECTIVE... not everyone will survive it, and before it's over, the DC Universe's covert organizations will be changed forever.

STAND UP-- PLEASE! I HAVEN'T BEGUN TO PAY WHAT I OWE YOU AND YOUR KIND!
NOR WHAT I OWE YOU AND YOURS.
KRAK!
WORM! HOW DARE YOU?!
THIS WAS MY FIGHT AND I DIDN'T NEED ANY HELP SO NEXT TIME STAY OUT OF IT!

Scheduled shipping dates for issues in THE JANUS DIRECTIVE:

March 14	CHECKMATE! #15	April 11	FIRESTORM #86
March 21	SUICIDE SQUAD #27	April 18	SUICIDE SQUAD #29
March 28	CHECKMATE! #16	April 25	CHECKMATE! #18
April 4	SUICIDE SQUAD #28	May 2	SUICIDE SQUAD #30
April 11	CHECKMATE! #17	May 2	CAPTAIN ATOM #30
April 11	MANHUNTER #14		

A *BATMAN* YOU CAN WEAR

Between the special events in the pages of the monthly BATMAN and DETECTIVE COMICS titles and projects like the hardcover collections of the greatest Batman and Joker stories ever told, 1989 is truly the year of THE BATMAN. Now you can let everybody know you're part of the celebration by displaying the **BATMAN BUTTON SET #1.** This deluxe set of four buttons reprints four classic poses of The Batman and Robin from comics' Golden Age.

THE BATMAN BUTTON SET #1 is part of the ongoing celebration of the Darknight Detective's 50th Anniversary, which will include publishing projects—and two more Batman Button sets. Each button set is limited to 10,000 numbered sets, so be sure to reserve your set of these collector's items now.

THE LEGEND OF AQUAMAN REVEALED

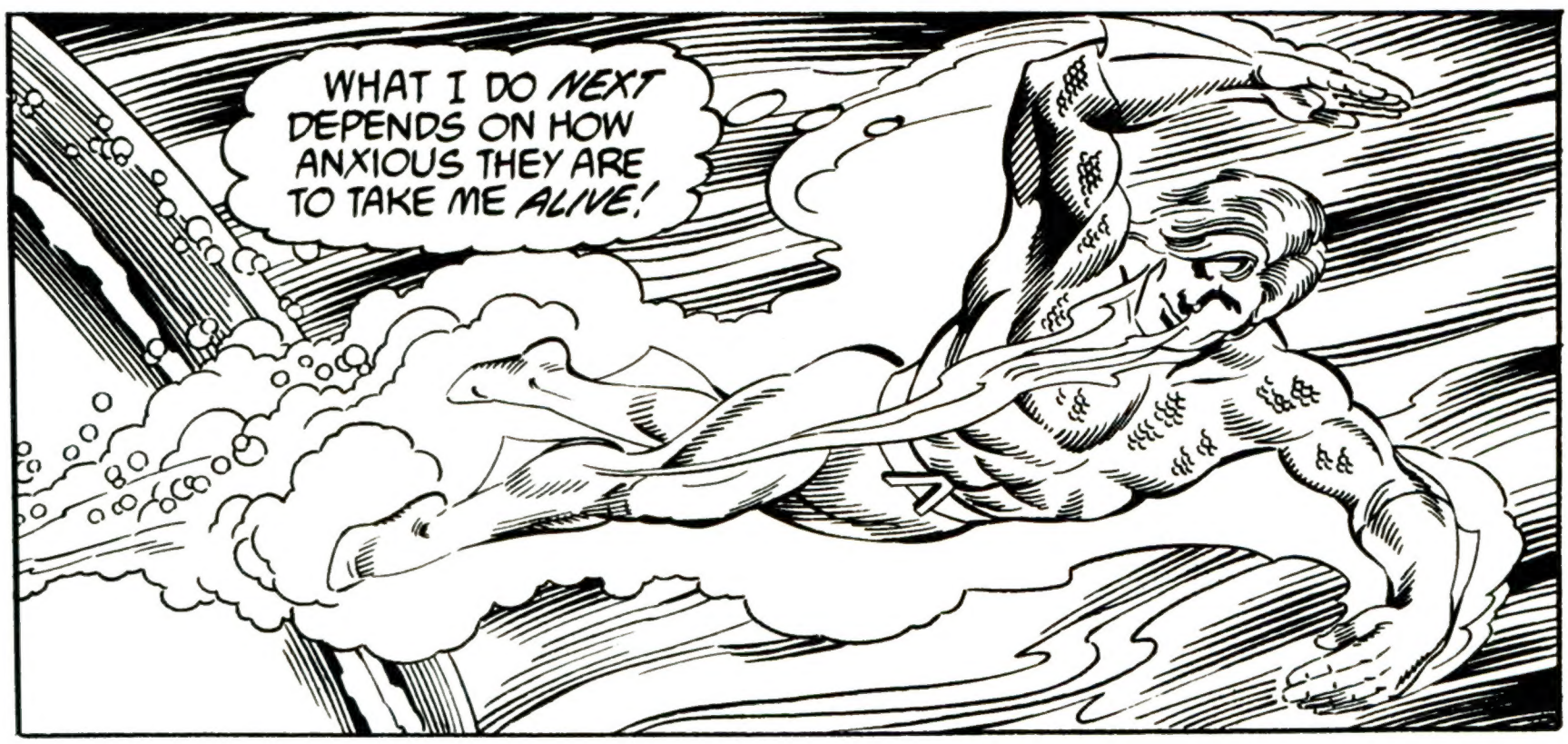
Today he's known as the King of the Seven Seas, but before that, he was Arthur Curry, son of a lighthouse keeper.

THE LEGEND OF AQUAMAN SPECIAL #1 goes back to those unusual beginnings to reveal the complete inside story of Arthur Curry, from the meeting of his parents, to his growth from a boy with the power to wander the oceans of the world and control the creatures of the seas, to his often turbulent life as AQUAMAN.

THE LEGEND OF AQUAMAN SPECIAL #1 is a 48-page one-shot special in DC's New Format and is plotted by Keith Giffen, scripted by Robert Loren Fleming, and features art by Curt Swan and Eric Shanower.

But the story you'll read in THE LEGEND OF AQUAMAN SPECIAL is just the tip of the iceberg, because the story of AQUAMAN will continue next month in a five issue mini-series by Giffen, Fleming, and Swan.

So get in the swim of things and don't miss THE LEGEND OF AQUAMAN SPECIAL #1.



Paul Kupperberg, Writer
Peggy May, Editor
Veronica Carlin, Designer

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THE COMING OF... *THE BLASTERS*

They never asked to become super-heroes.

But now that they are, they have no choice but to do what super-heroes do best ...risk their lives combatting the forces of evil wherever they're found.

THE BLASTERS were a group of ordinary men and women ...until the events chronicled in the pages of INVASION! Fifty human beings were abducted by the Dominion and left alone in a minefield—a minefield filled with experimental explosives that killed all but seven. These seven joined the ranks of metahumans as detailed in the pages of INVASION! #1. With the war over, some accept their powers and run with them. Others just want to forget and resume normal lives. But you know how those forces of evil can be.

So when the Spider Guild reveal themselves in their pursuit of the Omega Men, what choice do these reluctant heroes have? That's why they become THE BLASTERS.

And that's where the action begins.

THE BLASTERS SPECIAL #1, a 48-page one-shot special that picks up where INVASION! left off, is written by Peter David and features art by James W. Fry and Robert Campanella.

The trouble's hit the fan...and now it's up to THE BLASTERS to clean up the mess.

FROM • THE EDITOR

I've been editing DIRECT CURRENTS for more than a year now, and I've gotten a lot of mail with suggestions about ways to improve things. We've also bandied about ideas that people at DC have come up with. You'll see many of these ideas take life in the pages of upcoming issues.

But the most frequent suggestion from you, worded in both polite and hostile terms, has been "Get those shipping dates right."

Sometimes a particular title has been off by just a week. And sometimes a title has been off by months.

For the last few months, however, we've been having a rash of late shipments at DC Comics. This makes the weekly listings in DIRECT CURRENTS confusing.

I can't do anything about the late shipments—the folks who do that kind of stuff are working toward a solution. But I *can* do something about DIRECT CURRENTS.

For a few months, at least, we're going to try listing the month's books in a monthly rather than a weekly checklist. That means that you'll see funny things, like two issues of CHECKMATE! listed—of course, some of that is because of the weekly schedule of the JANUS DIRECTIVE—and it means you won't know for sure which week to go to your store to pick up a particular title.

It's not an ideal solution. But I still think that this is better than promising you a particular shipping week—and then not meeting that promise.

We're working on getting the books back on a regular schedule. Until then, I hope you'll find this monthly checklist useful.

See ya,

Peggy

BOOKS SHIPPING IN MARCH

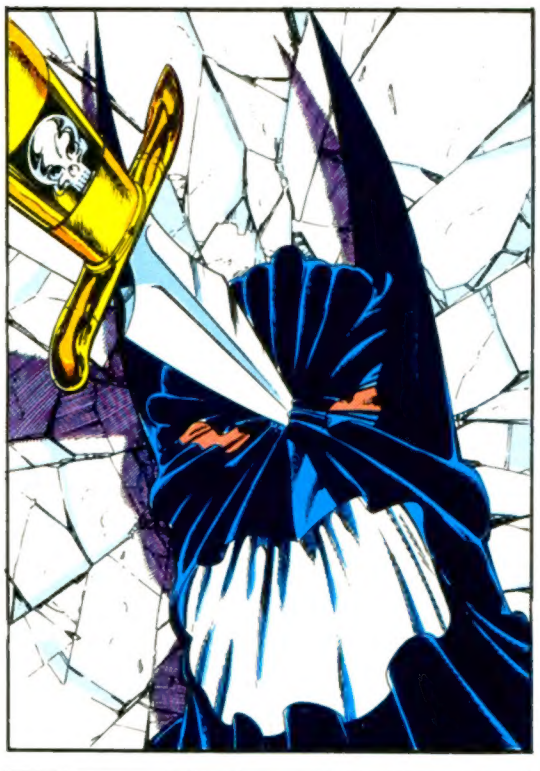
☐ **ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™ #5**
This joke will *kill* you . . . just as legend says it killed a king. Now the grave of the Jester is being desecrated so that others can learn the secret of the deadly joke before Onyx the invincible and companions deliver the final punchline. Written by Dan Mishkin, with art and cover by Jan Duursema. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #454**
While Superman is held captive aboard an intergalactic slaveship in space, on Earth the cops would like to talk to Clark Kent about the charred body found in his apartment. Written and drawn by Jerry Ordway. Plus, the conclusion of the 4-part "Hostile Takeover" story, by Roger Stern, Ordway, Dan Jurgens, and Dennis Janke. Cover by Ordway. $.75

☐ **ANIMAL MAN #11**
Animal Man and Vixen travel to Africa seeking answers to a deadly mystery . . . and more of the facts behind his true origins come to the fore. Written by Grant Morrison, with art by Chas Truog and Doug Hazlewood. Cover by Brian Bolland. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **THE BATMAN BUTTON SET #1**
(set #1 of 3)
The Batman's 50th Anniversary celebration rolls on with this deluxe set of four buttons, reprinting classic illustrations from the Caped Crusader's Golden Age stories. $8.00

☐ **THE BATMAN #433**
Beginning the 3-part "The Many Deaths of The Batman" series-within-a-series. Someone is murdering the friends Bruce Wayne met during the lost years of The Batman . . . and leaving the corpses dressed in Batman costumes. Written by John Byrne, with art by Jim Aparo and Mike DeCarlo. Cover by Byrne. $.75



THE BATMAN #433

☐ **BLACKHAWK #3**
The C.I.A. sends Blackhawk to Italy to wage a propaganda campaign to unseat a Communist political candidate and rescue an undercover agent in danger. But while in Rome, Blackhawk seeks aid and comfort in the arms of a sympathetic Italian noblewoman. Written by Marty Pasko, with art by Rick Burchett and Pablo Marcos. Cover by Burchett. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $1.50

☐ **BLACKHAWK ANNUAL #1**
The daughter of Death Mayhew is out for revenge against Blackhawk for the death of her father. The Blackhawks are out to aid the C.I.A. in overthrowing the Communist government of Albania. And who is the father of Lady Blackhawk's child? This 64-page special includes both a Who's Who section and a behind-the-scenes story spotlighting Blackhawk Express, by Elliot Maggin and Dick Rockwell. Written by Martin Pasko, pencilled by Rick Burchett, inked by Bill Wray. Cover by Chris Wozniak. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $2.95

BLACKHAWK ANNUAL #1

☐ **BLASTERS SPECIAL #1**
A 48-page one-shot special, continuing the tale begun in the pages of INVASION! A group of heroes who never asked for the powers bestowed upon them are trying to resume their normal lives . . . but they can't help becoming embroiled in the deadly conflict between the Spider Guild and the Omega Men. Written by Peter David, with art and cover by James W. Fry and Robert Campanella. $2.00

☐ **CAPTAIN ATOM #28**
Twenty years after the fact, Captain Atom finally learns who framed him for treason. Now, with the help of Justice League International members Blue Beetle, Booster Gold, and Mister Miracle, Cap's going to try to survive long enough to clear himself. Written by Cary Bates, with art and cover by Pat Broderick and Bob Smith. $1.00

☐ **CATWOMAN #4**
(of a 4-issue mini-series)
The legend of The Catwoman is born in the throes of Selina's battle with The Batman. Written by Mindy Newell, with art and cover by J.J. Birch and Michael Bair. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $1.50

☐ **CHECKMATE! #15**
Beginning, the 11-part "Janus Directive," as CHECKMATE! goes on a bi-weekly schedule for the next two months. While a Knight faces the armored might of the mysterious assassin known as The Bishop, Amanda Waller sets in motion forces that could destroy Checkmate and the rest of America's intelligence community. Continues in SUICIDE SQUAD #27. Written by Paul Kupperberg, with art by Steve Erwin and Al Vey. Cover by Art Thibert. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **CHECKMATE! #16**
Part 3 of the 11-part "Janus Directive." Harry Stein sends a Knight, Black Thorn, and Valentina Vostok to grab Amanda Waller before her efforts destroy the nation's spy agencies . . . the way General Eiling wants Major Force to destroy Checkmate's headquarters. Continues in SUICIDE SQUAD #28. Written by Paul Kupperberg, with art by Rick Hoberg and Al Vey. Cover by Art Thibert. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **COPS™ #11**
It's a dirty job, but someone's got to do it, which is why one of the COPS team members lets himself get captured, just to prove a point. Part 3 of 3. Written by Doug Moench, with art and cover by Pat Broderick and Pablo Marcos. $1.00

☐ **DETECTIVE COMICS #599**
Bruce Wayne . . . a traitor? The Darknight Detective delves into the "lost" years of his career in order to clear his name . . . only to place himself in even greater danger. Part 2 of 3. Written by Sam Hamm, with art by Denys Cowan and Dick Giordano. Cover by Denys Cowan and Malcolm Jones III. $.75

☐ **DOC SAVAGE #8**
The saga of the Mind Molder concludes, pitting Savage against Savage . . . and forever changing the ranks of Doc's trusted assistants. Written by Mike W. Barr, with art by Rod Whigham and Scott Hanna. Cover by Adam Kubert and Andy Kubert. *(Deluxe Format)* $1.75

☐ **DOCTOR FATE #6**
There's no place like home . . . even for the demon Petey, who makes a

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crazy trip back home to his native dimension in this issue. Written by J.M. DeMatteis, with art by Shawn McManus and Mark McKenna. Cover by McManus. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **THE DOOM PATROL #22**
The *new* Doom Patrol takes the battle with the Scissormen to their home dimension . . . and the sinister City of Bone. Written by Grant Morrison, with art and cover by Richard Case and Scott Hanna. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **DRAGONLANCE™ #8**
Kalthanan might be able to talk his way out of a confrontation with Laurana and Tanis . . . but can he face the new and disturbing truth about himself? The "Raistlin's Pawn" story concludes. Written by Dan Mishkin, with art by Mike Collins, Ron Randall, and Randy Elliott. Cover by Randall. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **FIRESTORM THE NUCLEAR MAN #85**
By the time this story is over, you may not recognize Firestorm, as the Nuclear Man gets a new costume . . . and a new identity. Written by John Ostrander, with art by Tom Grindberg and Sam De La Rosa. Cover by Grindberg. $1.00

☐ **FLASH #26**
The fate of Flash is left up in the air as Jerry, Tina, and Mason track him to Swainsville and find only a deep crater, begging the question of whether the Fastest Man Alive has exploded or been transformed into the local legend known as the Porcupine Man. Written by William Messner-Loebs, with art and cover by Greg LaRocque and Larry Mahlstedt. $1.00

☐ **GAMMARAUDERS™ #4**
The Bioborgs are the last hope for civilization as we know it . . . which isn't good news, considering that they're hopelessly outnumbered deep in the heart of Slugnoid territory. Written by Peter Gillis, with art and cover by Martin King and David Cooper *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **GILGAMESH II #2**
(of a 4-book mini series)
The Nightshadow is in Central America, which leads Gilgamesh and The Other to go there after him . . . or it . . . or *whatever*. Written and drawn by Jim Starlin, with color by Steve Oliff. Cover by Starlin. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. Prestige Format.)* $3.95

☐ **GREEN ARROW #18**
Green Arrow is on the trail of the Horseman, the mysterious bounty hunter cutting a bloody swath through Seattle. Part 2 of a 2-part story. Written by Mike Grell, with art and cover by Dan Jurgens and Dick Giordano. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $1.25

☐ **HAYWIRE #9**
The Combine's man breaks into a Federal Reserve Bank to attract Haywire. What some guys won't do for attention! Plus, White Lotus returns. Written by Michael Fleisher, with art by Vince Giarrano and Jose Marzan. Cover by Giarrano and Kyle Baker. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format)* $1.50

HAYWIRE #9

☐ **HELLBLAZER #18**
At last, John Constantine is once more a man with a mission, setting out on a search of his own for Mercury. Written by Jamie Delano, with art by Richard Piers Rayner and Mark Buckingham. Painted cover by Dave McKean. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $1.25

☐ **HERO HOTLINE #2**
(of a 6-issue mini-series)
Terrorists take a school bus full of kids hostage. Who you gonna call? The Hero Hotline, of course . . . but can Microwavabelle handle it, knowing that her own children are among the hostages? Written by Bob Rozakis, with art by Stephen DeStefano and Kurt Schaffenberger. Cover by DeStefano and Karl Kesel. *(New Format)* $1.75

☐ **THE HUNTRESS #2**
The Huntress tracks her family's killers, digging deeper into the tense balance of power of the criminal underworld . . . and getting deeper into her transformation into the woman who stalks the animals that prey on the innocent. Written by Joey Cavalieri, with art and cover by Joe Staton and Bruce Patterson. $1.00

☐ **JUSTICE LEAGUE EUROPE #2**
Captain Atom decides to split up the JLE to continue the search for the Nazi-killer, but, with the entire population of France against them, the League soon learns that the concept of "divide and conquer" is all too true. Written by Keith Giffen and J.M. DeMatteis, with art by Bart Sears and Joe Rubinstein. Cover by Sears. $.75

☐ **JUSTICE LEAGUE INTERNATIONAL #26**
The drive for new members is over and the new JLI line-up takes its place. Meanwhile, Blue Beetle is deprogrammed by Amanda Waller . . . and it's a toss-up which experience was worse—the sickness or the cure. Written by Keith Giffen and J.M. DeMatteis, with art and cover by Ty Templeton and Joe Rubinstein. $.75

☐ **LEGEND OF AQUAMAN SPECIAL #1**
The origin of the King of the Seven Seas is re-told in this 48-page one-shot special. Written by Keith Giffen and Robert Loren Fleming; pencilled by Curt Swan; inked by Eric Shanower; with cover by Swan and Shanower. *(New Format)* $2.00

☐ **L.E.G.I.O.N. '89 #4**
It's the members of the L.E.G.I.O.N. against Lobo . . . and learn the real motives for Dox's liberation of Colu. Written by Keith Giffen and Alan Grant, with art by Barry Kitson and Mike DeCarlo. Cover by Kevin Maguire. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #60**
Part 1 of the 4-part "Magic Wars." The forces of magic are loose in the scientific world of the 30th Century . . . and the effects may be more than the Legion and the rest of the universe can handle. Written by Paul Levitz, with art by Keith Giffen and Al Gordon. Cover by Steve Lightle. *(Deluxe Format)* $1.75

☐ **MANHUNTER #13**
It's back to business as usual for Manhunter, but he's finding that either he's lost his touch . . . or the woman he's after is better at eluding than he is at tracking. Written by John Ostrander and Kim Yale, with art by John Koch and Pablo Marcos. Cover by Doug Rice. $1.00

☐ **MISTER MIRACLE #5**
It's Mister Miracle, Big Barda, Highfather, and The Forever People versus The Dark . . . and it doesn't seem like the assembled heroes stand a chance. Written by J.M. DeMatteis, with art and cover by Ian Gibson.

☐ **NEW GODS #3**
The Insect entourage is brought to New Genesis by Orion in hopes of forging an alliance, but before that's possible they will have to prove their worth in a deadly Duel of Champions that pits the new Forager in a battle to the death with Lonar. Written by Jim Starlin, with art by Paris Cullins and Al Lewis. Cover by Cullins and P. Craig Russell. *(New Format)* $1.50

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☐ **THE NEW GUARDIANS #8**
With Tom Kalmaku's wife as the pawn in this most dangerous game, the Guardians confront their arch-enemy in a deadly endgame. Is there a traitor in their midst? Written by Cary Bates, with art and cover by Joe Staton and Mark Farmer. *(New Format)* $1.25

☐ **THE NEW TITANS #56**
Danny Chase, newly fired from the Titans, breaks into CBI headquarters to find clues to the whereabouts of his missing parents, who are caught up in the Janus Directive plot. Written by Marv Wolfman, with art by George Pérez and Romeo Tanghal. Cover by Pérez. *(Deluxe Format)* $1.75

☐ **THE PHANTOM #2**
A gunrunner who's already been marked by The Phantom's sign of the skull is about to learn the true meaning of the power of the Ghost Who Walks. Written by Mark Verheiden, with art and cover by Luke McDonnell. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **POWER OF THE ATOM #12**
It's *big* trouble for little Atom as he faces both the power of a new villain, Edg . . . and his ex-wife's new husband. Written by William Messner-Loebs, with art and cover by Graham Nolan and K.S. Wilson. $1.00

☐ **THE QUESTION #27**
Hub City's mayor-elect, Myra Fermin, lies in a coma . . . and the city itself lies on the edge of disaster . . . with the only hope for both to be found in an issue of a comic book from the 1940's. Written by Denny O'Neil, with art and cover by Denys Cowan and Malcolm Jones III. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. Deluxe Format.)* $1.75

☐ **SANDMAN #5**
The Sandman enters the dreams of Mister Miracle in an effort to recover his stolen ruby . . . the same ruby Dr. Destiny seeks. Guest-starring the Martian Manhunter. Written by Neil Gaiman, with art by Sam Kieth and Malcolm Jones III. Painted cover by Dave McKean. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $1.50

☐ **SECRET ORIGINS #40**
There's a lot of monkey business going on this month as we present the origins of DC's greatest apes, beginning with the origin of Gorilla City, written by Cary Bates and pencilled by Carmine Infantino. Also, the story behind Detective Chimp, as told by writer Andy Helfer and artist Mark Badger. And, last but not least, Congorilla, the story of a jungle explorer whose mind is trapped in the body of a golden gorilla, written by Tom Joyner, with art by K.S. Wilson. $1.50

☐ **THE SPECTRE #26**
"The Ghost in the Machine" story continues as a serial killer takes his jollies by accessing a super-computer that controls the world's nuclear arsenal. Written by Doug Moench, with art by Tom Artis and Robbie Busch. Cover by Artis. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **STARMAN #10**
The Batman guest-stars as Starman goes up against the all-new Blockbuster in a do-or-die battle. Written by Roger Stern, with art by Tom Lyle and Bob Smith. Cover by Lyle. $1.00

☐ **SUICIDE SQUAD #26**
Rick Flag is AWOL in Qurac, come to town to finish up some old business . . . and someone's got to die before it's over. The Squad reaches a major turning point. Written by John Ostrander and Kim Yale, with art by Grant Miehm and Karl Kesel. Cover by Kesel. $1.00

☐ **SUICIDE SQUAD #27**
Part 2 of the 11-part "Janus Directive." Amanda Waller sends out the Squad, Checkmate, Project: Peacemaker, and the CBI to destroy the Force of July and Project: Atom in hopes of forestalling a plot to overthrow America's intelligence community. Continues in CHECKMATE! #16. Written by John Ostrander and Kim Yale, with art and cover by John K. Snyder and Pablo Marcos. $1.00

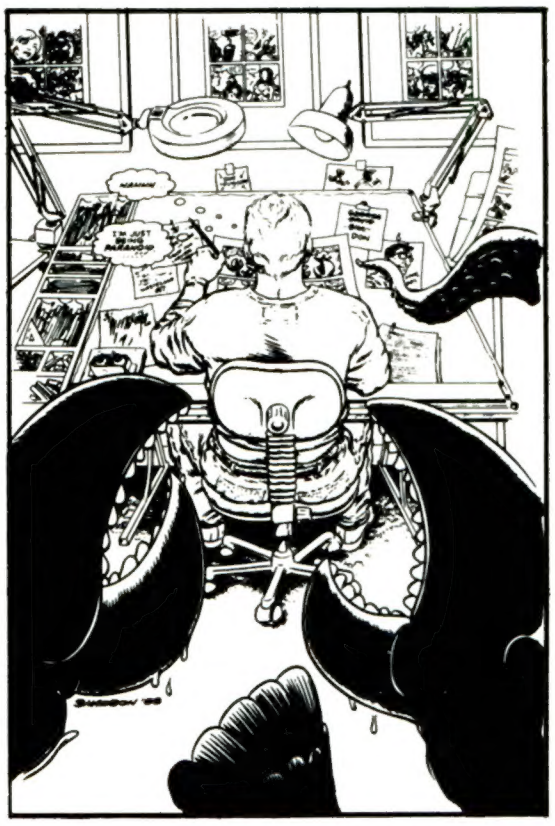
☐ **SUPERMAN #31**
With Superman still missing, it falls to Lex Luthor to rid Metropolis of the magical menace of Mr. Mxyzptlk. Written by Roger Stern, with art by Paris Cullins and Dennis Janke. Plus, part 3 of the 4-part "Hostile Takeover," by Stern, Jerry Ordway, Dan Jurgens, and Janke. The story concludes in ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #454. Cover by Gammill and Janke. $.75

☐ **SWAMP THING #86**
Swamp Thing's journey through time continues as he encounters Tomahawk and other "Heroes of the Revolution" in 1776. Written by Rick Veitch, with art and cover by Tom Yeates. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $1.50

☐ **UNKNOWN SOLDIER #6**
(of a 12-issue maxi-series)
An airplane carrying an H-bomb circles Manhattan, the pilot awaiting a code word from Muammar Qadhafi to abort his mission. But the terrorist leader keels over dead before he can deliver the word, leaving it up to the Soldier to save Manhattan from destruction. Written by James Owsley, with art and cover by Paul Gascoine. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $1.50

☐ **THE WANDERERS #13**
What will happen to the Wanderers? The series comes to its startling conclusion as the fate of the Wanderers is decided. Written by Doug Moench, with art by Dave Hoover and Robert Campanella. Cover by Steve Lightle. *(New Format)* $1.25

☐ **WASTELAND #17**
It's three times the terror with yet another trio of twisted tales, brought to you by writers John Ostrander and Del Close, and art by Donald Simpson, Michael Davis, and Bill Wray. Cover by Rick Magyar. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. Deluxe Format.)* $2.00



WASTELAND #17

☐ **WONDER WOMAN #30**
At last . . . Diana's quest for her magic lasso concludes as she finds herself in the final showdown with the Cheetah. Written by George Pérez, with art by Chris Marrinan and Will Blyberg. Cover by Pérez. $1.00

☐ **YOUNG ALL-STARS #25**
The "Atom and Evil" saga concludes as the Young All-Stars go head to head with Axis Amerika and Baron Blitzkrieg to prevent the first atomic bomb from being exploded in 1942. Written by Roy and Dann Thomas, with art by Ron Harris and Bob Downs. Cover by Harris. *(New Format)* $1.75

Shipping months, issues numbers, and issue descriptions are accurate reflections of DC Comics' schedule as of 1/15/89.

people at WORK

Paul Kupperberg

Some people in this business can remember the exact moment they discovered the four-color world where they would eventually find careers. Paul Kupperberg, on the other hand, can't remember a time when comic books *weren't* a part of his life. "I'm pretty sure I wasn't reading them in the womb," Paul says, "but I think that was about the last time I wasn't involved with comics."

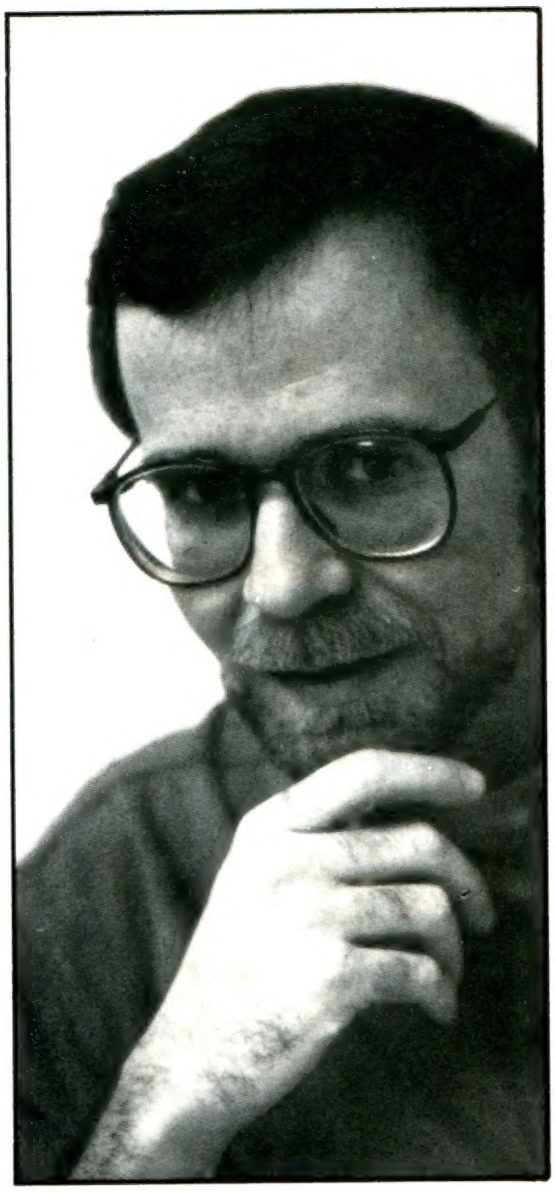
Paul was born June 14, 1955 in Brooklyn, New York, the second of three brothers. "My parents, Sidney and Lottie, were always very supportive of our interests," Paul recalls, "even when they didn't exactly understand them, like my older brother Alan's and my interest in comics. I think it helped that my father had been a fan of the old pulp magazines back in the 1930's. In fact, while other dads were bringing their kids 'See Spot run' books, my father was giving us paperback editions of the Edgar Rice Burroughs books to read. So at least he understood the comic book and fantasy fan mentality. Sort of.

"Comics were a big part of my growing up. They helped develop my love of reading and my imagination. By the time I was six or seven years old, I was already writing and drawing my own stories, and I'd decided that the only thing I wanted to be when I grew up was a writer. Of course, even back then I think I realized that the alternative would be having to get a *real* job."

Paul continued writing and following comics, especially those published by DC. "I was a stone-cold DC junkie from the get-go," Paul says. "I started reading them at the height of the so-called Silver Age, around 1960, when Dick Sprang was still drawing The Batman and Wayne Boring and Curt Swan were doing Superman. The characters absolutely fascinated me and, while I read Marvel Comics because my older brother collected them, it was the stuff DC published that was my first love. MARTIAN MANHUNTER was one of my favorites, and the JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, ADAM STRANGE, GREEN LANTERN . . . just about anything edited by Julie Schwartz, although I didn't know who was responsible for all that neat stuff until years later, when I got heavily into fandom."

It was another Paul who was responsible for Paul's entry into comics fandom. "I thought I was the only kid at Meyer Levin Junior High School who read comics, let alone collected them, but people started telling me there was this other guy who was also into them. I finally met him, some kid named Paul Levitz. I wonder whatever happened to him?" Paul laughs. Of course, Paul L. is still into comics, now as writer of the LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES and executive vice-president of DC Comics. "Paul was more heavily into the whole fan scene than I was, subscribing to a bunch of fanzines like "The Comic Reader" and "Newfangles."

"Paul and I and some other friends started publishing fanzines around 1969, but it was mostly for our own amusement, mainly be-



cause we weren't selling anything else we produced," Paul tells us. "But that changed in 1971 when we came out with the first issue of "Etcetera," a monthly news fanzine, very much like Direct Currents, except that we covered all the comics companies. A few months later, we acquired the rights and mailing list to "The Comic Reader," one of the oldest 'zines around, and changed the name to "Etcetera" and things just kind of took off from there."

By the time the two Pauls were in high school, their little dining room table enterprise had become a full-blown publishing empire with its own office in the basement apartment of the Levitz house. "We eventually hit something like a 7,000 copy circulation with "The Comic Reader" and had started publishing and distributing other 'zines, as well as producing the program books for the big July 4th comic convention that was held every year in New York. I had to turn down a position with my high school newspaper because I was too busy working on TCR Publications.

"Eventually, though, when we started college, we had to give up the publishing biz. Other people took over "The Comic Reader" and we moved on, but I got a lot out of that whole experience, not the least of which being the contacts I'd made with the various comic book companies and professionals. Like I said, I'd known I wanted to be a writer since I could put three words together to form a sentence, so it was only natural that I tried breaking into comics as a writer."

Paul was still a student at Brooklyn College, majoring in English, when he made his first sale. "I still remember the day I heard from Nick Cuti, the editor at Charlton Comics. It was April 3, 1975 when he called to tell me they were buying a five-page horror story, which was eventually drawn by another newcomer to the field, Mike Zeck. I nearly gave my kid brother a heart attack with the scream I let out after I hung up.

"But I didn't feel like I'd *really* hit the big time until about four months later when I started writing for DC. Denny O'Neil commissioned me to do a story for SUPERMAN FAMILY about Christmas on Krypton. When that came out, I felt I'd made it in the comics field . . . I was actually able to get my hands on all those characters that I'd grown up reading and loving."

When asked for a brief rundown on the characters he's handled since then, Paul could only laugh. "It'd be a lot quicker to list the ones I *haven't* written. Back when I first started, I did a lot of mystery stories for books like HOUSE OF MYSTERY and WEIRD WAR TALES and gradually worked my way into super-heroes. I wrote AQUAMAN, NIGHTWING AND FLAMEBIRD, THE NEW DOOM PATROL, ATOM, HAWKMAN, some LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES stories, THE WORLD OF KRYPTON mini-series, KID FLASH, GREEN ARROW, WONDER WOMAN, THE BATMAN, ELONGATED MAN, GREEN LANTERN, SUPERMAN (both in the comics and for the syndicated newspaper strip), SUPERBOY, SUPERGIRL, ZATANNA, JIMMY OLSEN, ARION, the JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, FIRESTORM, STAR TREK, SUPER POWERS, ALL-STAR SQUADRON . . . you want more? I also wrote a pair of novels for Marvel and Pocket Books, starring Spider-Man and the Hulk, plus humor and parody stuff for Marvel's Crazy Magazine, as well as writing and editing on a video magazine and some special promotional and advertising comics for things like Radio Shack and a theater company in Chicago.

"More recently, I've done VIGILANTE, THE PHANTOM STRANGER, POWER GIRL, THE DOOM PATROL, and CHECKMATE! Right now, the project I'm most excited about has to do with CHECKMATE! It's called 'The Janus Directive,' which is an eleven-part crossover story between CHECKMATE! and SUICIDE SQUAD, which are going bi-weekly for the two months it'll take to tell the story, along with MANHUNTER and CAPTAIN ATOM. John Ostrander, Kim Yale, and I are coordinating the whole thing among the titles, which is an effort to finally clarify and solidify the DC Universe's intelligence and spy agencies. It's been a lot of work keeping the whole thing straight, since John and Kim are in Chicago and I'm in Connecticut, but it's fun, especially since what we're doing will have a major impact both on CHECKMATE! in particular and the DC Universe in general.

"I've also done a few stints on staff at DC," Paul continues. "I've been a proofreader, done some editing, and put in some time in DC's marketing department. But when push comes to shove, my years as a freelance writer have rendered me unsuitable for your basic 9 to 5 gig. I've managed to keep busy, all the while avoiding those real jobs I knew I didn't want even when I was just a kid.

"Who says childhood dreams can't come true?"

Detective COMICS®

From the archives of the DC Comics Library, we bring you the cover of DETECTIVE COMICS #27 (1939), the first appearance of The Batman. The Caped Crusader celebrates 50 years of publication this year.